

To the Parliament of the Commonwealth of *ENGLAND*:

The humble Representation and desires of divers Freeholders and others well affected to the Commonwealth of England, inhabiting within the County of Bedford.

SHEWETH:

THat whereas we are fallen into those times, wherein the overturnings of many foundations have been seen, and the deceitfulness of many hearts hath been made manifest, and many for their hypocrisie and rebellion against God have been made examples of his justice; and when they have shewed themselves a while, have passed away, and their places have not been found, nor their names kept in remembrance: and these changes have been wrought by him who changeth not, and these overturnings have come to pass, that he might raige whose right it is. Now therefore if you be found standing in like manner, in the same places, they will be as slippery to you as they were to those that have both gone before and succeeded you; for the Lord hath appeared in great power and glory to stain the pride of all flesh, and to bring to nought the counsels of the wicked, and to make the wrath of men to praise him, and the remainder of wrath will he restrain: and whereas the Lord hath again brought you into your places, and put a great price into your hands, Oh remember what the Lord hath done by you and for you in years past, what a Divine presence attended your Councils at home, and Armies abroad; and what a terror was upon your enemies round about: but how soon did you forget his wonders, when peace and prosperity entred your borders? were you not grown negligent in the work of the Lord? and for your remissness might he not justly have given you up as a prey to the spoiler, and for your and our unthankfulness (for so great deliverances) did he not suffer you to be laid aside that so others might come up to act their parts, who promised fair; but what is brought forth by them more than a lye, many are witnesses. You have also seen them made an example before you; therefore take heed lest you thirst after that which they thirsted after, and were overturned. For if after all these things you shall again do the work of the Lord negligently, will not his displeasure smite against you above others? because you hath he known and owned in time past. Therefore take heed to your selves, lest fear and an evil heart surprize you, and weaken your hands: But be of good courage, and do the work of the Lord perfectly, with an upright heart (not fearing what man can do unto you) and let every abominable thing be removed, that so no brand may remain upon you; and then hearts and prayers of the upright will be for you, and the lives and estates of your Representatives shall freely be exposed for your safety, in your prosecuting of these and other good and righteous things which we humbly propose as followeth.

I. That that great and intollerable burthen of Tithes (so long complained against) may be removed, which hath been brought in (many hundreds of years since the days of Christ) by the Pope, as a maintenance for his Ministers, grounded upon misinterpretation of Scripture, and the people being possessed that it would free them from the pains of Purgatory, and was testified against by our famous Reformers *John Wickliffe, Walter Brute, William Thorpe*, and divers others who suffered in testimony against it, and other innovations, and is found in our dayes a very great oppression to the Husbandman (it many times exceeding the full years value of the land) as also a great burthen on the consciences of very many upright hearted people, who have suffered the spoiling of their goods, and imprisonment of their bodies, as a testimony against it (through the evil execution of bad Ministers of the Law) which Law it self is grounded upon a supposed precedent right, which is now found to have no footing in the Scriptures, nor sound reason, on which all our Laws ought to be grounded. Yet so that respect be had, that some reasonable satisfaction may be made to Impropriators according to equity and a good conscience, but not by continuance of Tithe paying, and also that Mortuaries and all offerings and other like things may be quite rooted up.

II. That the Common Law of this Commonwealth may be truly regulated (right reason being made the ground thereof) and plainly known in the English tongue what they are, and that all Actions of Trespasse, and things of small value may be speedily tried in every County, and that the chargeable and tedious suits in the Chancery and Exchequer Chamber may either be regulated to le's charge, or taken away, and that no man be forced by oath or otherwise to be his own accuser, and that none may be condemned or tried in Chambers or Courts, but in open Courts by the verdict of their Peers, and offenders may receive punishment proportionable to their offences. And that the Ministers of the Law may be liable to just punishment, in case they act contrary to, or refuse to do Justice according to law and equity; all which punishments to be ascertained, and not left at will; and that all penal Laws which are a snare upon many good members of the Commonwealth may speedily be repealed, and the rest so abridged, as that the people may not of necessity be ignorant of any part of the Law under which they live. Also that no person that is to enter into any office be caused to take any oath, or make any solemn promise, which he shall not be able to perform, or cannot perform with a good conscience.

III. That provision may be made, that such who live peaceably in godliness and honesty, though of different persuasions in matters of faith and worship, may be equally protected and encouraged, and that the civil liberty of all persons within this Commonwealth be so tendered, that neither their persons may be imprisoned, nor their goods taken away, without the breach of some known Law, and due prosecution thereupon. And that all such Magistrates and Ministers of Justice, Jaylors, Bailiffs, and others may be proceeded against, and made exemplary who have acted or shall act contrary hereunto.

IV. That the *Malitia* of this Commonwealth may be speedily settled in the hands of such faithful persons, who have manifested the continuance of their integrity to the *Good old Cause* of justice and freedom, and that all faithful persons who have been ejected out of places of trust military or civil, or for conscience sake have been necessitated to quit their employments, may be speedily invited and restored to their former capacities, and that none for the future may be employed in any place of trust, but such who are fitly qualified thereunto, and have (without declension) manifested their good affection to the Commonwealth. And that special care may be had to keep off all flatterers and time servers.

V. That Wills may be proved, and administration of goods and chattels granted in every County, and that all persons may have power to sue for their respective Legacies and Portions in every such County, and that for the preventing of fraud, a Register may be kept in each County, of all sales of lands and mortgages, and things of like nature, and that Deodands may be taken off, and if any person shall kill either themselves or others, yet their heirs and innocent families may not thereby be deprived of their right.

VI. That as you thought fit to take away wardships as a badge of the Norman yoke, to the great ease of persons of great estates (though they much enriched the publick Treasury) so you would take some effectual course for the alteration of Coppy-hold tenures (as great a mark of Tyranny) that the poor Tenants thereof may not be left to the mercy of the Lords of such Mannors (whilest great men are made free) but may all have a proportionable taste (in their capacities) of the benefit of a Commonwealths freedom.

VII. That in due season care may be taken, that the persons intrusted with the Legislative power, may not be perpetuated in their power, but that all persons within this Commonwealth may take of subjection as well as of rule; and in order thereunto that in convenient time provision may be made for an equal distribution of elections, and a due and safe electing of the Representatives of this Commonwealth with such due qualifications both of the Electors and Elected, as may consist with the interest and welfare thereof, and that all those who have not given some signal testimony of their good affection to the *Good old cause*, may be incapable of being elected.

This Representation being read VVednesday, June 16. the deliverers thereof were called in, and Mr. Speaker, by order of the House, gave them this answer; Gentlemen, The House hath read over your Representation and Desires, and they have observed the particulars, and therein find your good affections expressed; and for that the House have commanded me to give you their Thanks, and I do give you the Thanks of this House for your good affections; and as for the particulars in your Petition, the House will take such of them, as they shall find good for the Nation, into consideration in due time.